

FREE FLAMES OF FREEDOM SPECIAL

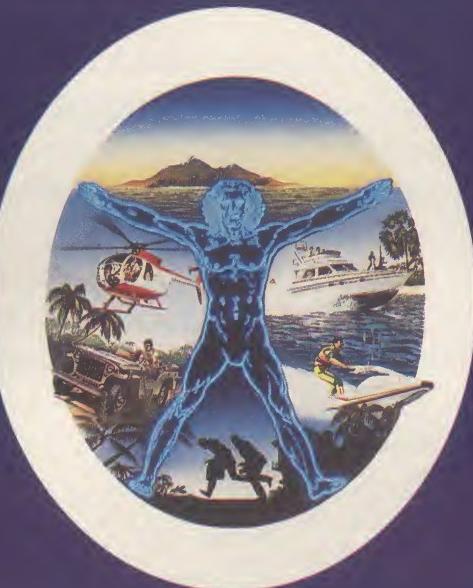
# ACE

ADVANCED COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

■ ST ■ AMIGA ■ C64 ■ CPC  
■ SPECTRUM ■ PC  
■ NINTENDO ■ SEGA ■

A SPECIAL EDITION  
OF THE ULTIMATE  
GAMES  
AND FUTURE TECH  
MAGAZINE.

FLAME ON!  
MIDWINTER 2 REVIEWED



PLUS:

GUNSHIP 2000 ● RAILROAD TYCOON ●  
SILENT SERVICE ● RICK DANGEROUS 2 ●  
SIMULCRA ● COVERT ACTION ● MIDWINTER ●  
F15 STRIKE EAGLE II ● M1 TANK PLATOON ●

# WELCOME!

Welcome to your free Mini-ACE. This bite-sized version of the Ultimate Games Magazine has been compiled from more than a dozen issues. We've picked reviews from the last couple of years to give an impression of the lengths we go to when previewing and reviewing software. We take our gaming seriously, and aim to give you the best possible picture of all aspects of each title we look at. We hope you enjoy the mag.

Another ACE Publication

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ACE Magazine is published on the 8th of every month.

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## OFFER

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Your chance to ensure that you receive your own copy of the full-size ACE delivered direct to your door every single month. And you can also select a free game for your trouble.

# MIDWINTER II

## flames of freedom

**Bigger and better than its astonishing predecessor, Midwinter II is an amazing game.**

It's 65 years since the big freeze. The global climate is beginning to warm and Midwinter Island is thawing out and breaking down into a set of new islands. Off the coast of Africa, a strategically important set of atolls and islands are rapidly falling under the control of the tyrannical Saharan Empire. Agora, stronghold of the Atlantic Federation is in an increasingly precarious situation. It is clear that once sufficient control over the bulk of islands in the group has been attained, Saharan forces will be strong enough to overwhelm the Federation forces on Agora.

It's your task, as a sole Federation agent to prevent Saharan growth, liberate islands, delay the Saharan armada and redress the balance of power.

Before the mission can begin, you must construct your agent. Name, colour, sex, height, weight and appearance can all be altered. The psychological and physical build of your agent will determine how you have to play the game. Equally, your actions during the game will alter the character. *Flames of Freedom* includes possibly the most worthwhile and tangible character development seen in a game so far.

Rather than embarking on a long campaign which may have no real effect on the march of the enemy, you can simulate the results of successful missions on certain islands and view how the Saharan fleet will behave as a result. The islands are connected via supply lines, and you'll soon learn how to create chain reactions; taking one island will cause another to fall, cutting off supply lines to another and so on.

By forcing the Saharan forces through Federation strongholds, you can force a higher rate of attrition on their part, thus making the final conflict on Agora more balanced.

Once you have chosen a particular set of islands to take, and which one you with whom you wish to start, your controller will then brief you as to your missions. Once each set of missions has been completed, the island will fall

under Federation control. Depending on the nature and strategic importance of the island, your list of missions will be appropriately tough.

Throughout the course of his mission, you must interact with characters on various islands. Some are neutral, others are strongly allied to either the Saharan or Atlantic cause. Others are double agents and some are just plain mysterious. A great many violent interactions with other people will enhance your ability to threaten and menace but the chances are you'll completely forget how to charm people.

Now, on top of all this strategy are the 3D graphics. Whenever you're in a vehicle, the world is depicted in polygon graphics. Superior to anything you've seen before, these represent the landscape in a truly amazing way. Waves break on the shore, the tide comes in, bombs leave craters and the world even looks different depending on what time of day it is. Infra-red cameras are available for night activity. This level of detail, of course, depletes the frame-rate a little but everything still comes together for an immensely impressive overall effect.

#### TRAVEL AND TIME

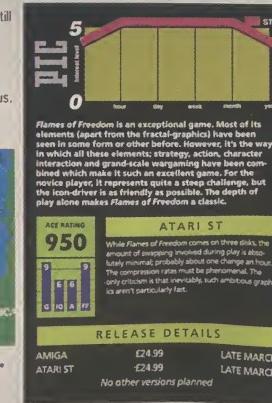
The *Flames of Freedom* gameworld is enormous. Probably around eight times the size of *Midwinter*. As a result, your chosen mode of



One of the fractal views of the game area. By testing your strategy on this screen you can avoid expending lots of time on ineffective island-topping.



One of the most entertaining modes of transport in the airplane, in all there are 22 different ways of moving around in the game. Each better suited to particular missions.



#### CHARACTER PSYCHOLOGY

HARM	good
SEX-APPEAL	average
LIBERTY	average
TREATS	average

Detailed breakdowns of your physical and psychological make-up are available for inspection at any time. As well as being able to define the initial levels, you can watch your character grow throughout the game. Each character has an entire personality of his own to encounter.

Maps of the island offer invaluable information on the locations of weapons, people and vehicles. (Below)



Throughout the game the chances are that your encounters with the secret police will end in the click. Your skills in the field, charm are often more useful than your muscle. (left)



Travel can take a long time. Protection of the Speed-Up van (top) will help you on your way. Handy parking on the lawn of a building (above). Detailed maps for the sea-bed and the waves themselves (below)

**ACE TrailBlazer**



transport is vital. Quite apart from simply travelling around the islands, there's a lot of ocean to cover too. There are around 22 different modes of transport, each with its own characteristics. Moving around the world no matter what transport you have is easy. By clicking on your destination using one of the variable-zoom fractal representations of the map, you can speed up time and reach your target almost immediately. Game time, of course, progresses as normal.

#### MISSIONS AND PEOPLE

The missions incorporated in the game offer far more depth than those in most war-strat games. You must assassinate enemy agents, blow up command centres, attack supply routes and build up confidences and alliances with the people you encounter on the islands. Successful completion of a set of missions will result in con-

gratulations from your commanding officer, some effect in slowing the Saharan assault, and possibly a bonus reward from the people of the island.

Once you've found a person (you'll know of at least one person on most islands), you can talk to them and try to get some useful information out of them. Some will offer help immediately, either by giving you transport,

#### THE MAPS

Maps offer all sorts of information depending on the zoom-rate. Icons denoting contacts, weapons and transport all pop up. By clicking on them, you can find out more about each one. It's from the map screen that all the long-distance travelling goes. These overviews of the game are invaluable.

• Jim Douglas



Your mysterious controller will present options and mission details. He can tell you about contacts, vehicles, the progress of the Saharan fleet and even secret weapons.



MICROPROSE are preparing to unleash a multi-chopper assault on the simulation market. ACE went to the USA to catch an exclusive peek of the game in development...

# GUNSHIP 2000

**G**unship has to be the most popular helicopter combat game ever - Microprose claim it still lifts off the shelves in respectable numbers, despite having been released over three years ago. Attention to detail, extensive missions and lots of incidental interest as you climbed up through the ranks made Gunship a winner.

Times have moved on, however, and Gunship's role as Top Gun of the chopper squad has arguably been surrendered to newcomer LHX Attack Chopper from Electronic Arts. Military sim

technology has improved in other ways, too. First you've got the obvious advances in 3D graphic routines and this has been accompanied by an increasing concentration on strategic diversity. Microprose's own MJ Tank Platoon pointed the way ahead on this last count, giving the player greater strategic opportunity by adding in more vehicles. Now, in the same vein, the company are out to regain air supremacy with Gunship 2000.

"This game is more revolutionary than evolutionary," declares game designer Jim Day. "First, you've got multiple helicopters in flight at the same time. As the commander of a five chopper platoon, you can tailor your outfit from a whole range of state-of-the-art gunships including Blackhawks, Apaches, Cobras, Kiowas, and more."

Quantity doesn't mean degraded quality, however, and Microprose have wisely ensured that the player still has access to total single chopper capability and gameplay whenever he wants. However, the ability to man, equip, and command an entire platoon adds enormously to the challenge.

What's more, you get a far greater number of armament options in Gunship 2000. The game designers spent hours poring over army manuals



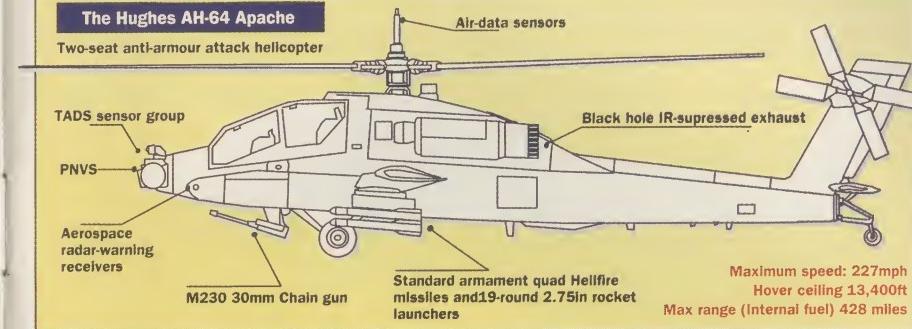
Now here's a neat idea, though it's not 100% certain it will be included in the final version. You can remove the cockpit display (except for vital gauges) and give yourself a better view of your surroundings. Here you're near the runway...

## MEET THE TEAM

Work on Gunship 2000 started in Spring 1990 and, by the time it's finished, will represent nearly ten man-years of work. A significant proportion of this was devoted to the development of the 3D rendering system. Lead programmer Darrell Dennis is actually a true-blue Britisher and it may come as no surprise to discover that he served his programming apprenticeship with Digital Integration. Additional programming is being done by Detmar Peterke, artworks by Michael Reis, and marketing inspiration by Moshe Millich. Game design is by Jim Day.



Game designer Jim Day (on the left) and Darrell Dennis relax in Darrell's dug-out at Prose's US headquarters



## FLASH TOPOGRAPHY

To do justice to the enhanced gameplay features of Gunship 2000, Microprose have developed a powerful new 3D system. Called 'Topographical 3D', the system has two main advantages over its rivals. First, it's faster (although 'Press point out that this game is designed for more powerful 68000 micros and PC 286+ machines). Second, it allows the player to choose to include more terrain detail without bogging down the system. Result: more detail, faster action, and larger maps. It could take you at least quarter of an hour to fly in a straight line across one of the worlds, giving you a vast playing area.

and the result is that every type of chopper can be kitted out with practically any variety of real-life compatible ordnance.

## WEST END THEATRE

There are two Western theatres of war for Gunship 2000 missions: the Persian Gulf (ironic, eh?) and Europe. The Gulf scenarios, although still in an early stage of development, already have the ring of familiarity about them, but the European scenarios look to be something quite spectacular. There's something rather eerie about piloting a few tons of war machine over cornfields, windmills, and the green, green grass of home.

Long-term interest is something that Microprose sims have never been short of, but



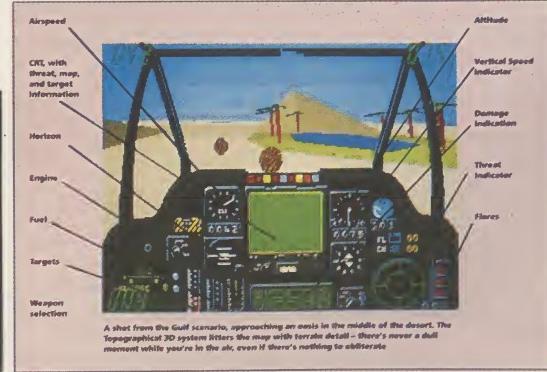
Now for the first time you can fly gunships over home territory as Microprose include a European scenario. Studio Pages, your time has come!



Varied environments are now de rigeur in all flight sims and Gunship 2000 gives plenty of options. There's rather more to see, however, because first you have up to five choppers and second you make them do much more interesting things - true to modern helicopter design, some of them can even do rolls and loops!

this time the company are really making sure that Gunship 2000 sticks around till its namesake anniversary by building in full scenario disk capability. Wherever there's trouble and dissension, wherever the forces of good are required to dash vast amounts of high-expo into the back gardens of the forces of evil, the data disks will be able to send you there.

Gunship 2000 is shaping up to be another



The 4-2-0 is not exactly a candidate for an Intercity 125 line, but it's a start...

Working like Network SouthEast, but once your Empire grows to a reasonable size you'll face similar problems to MR's bosses

4-2-0 No.

Maximum Speed:

Power at Drawbar: 1000hp

Price: \$20,000

Rated Train Speed / %Grade:

30 mph (0%), 21 mph (2%), 16 mph (3%)

25 mph (0%), 15 mph (2%), 11 mph (3%)

19 mph (0%), 12 mph (2%), 9 mph (3%)

cars: cars: cars:



RELEASE BOX		
PC	£34.95d	OUT NOW
No other version planned.		

All graphics cards are catered for. Obviously VGA is tops, but EGA is a joint coming up. While you're waiting for CGA the action is still crystal clear. Sound is pretty good, with effective train noises on the standard sound card, and you can even enjoy the benefit of atmospheric music and FX. Best of all, though, is that you don't need a 25 MHz processor to play it! The game Railroad Tycoon runs happily even on the crummiest machines.

GRAPHICS 7 IQ FACTOR 9 ACE RATING  
AUDIO 5 FUN FACTOR 9 943



Obviously this is not the sort of game you can just plough straight into. There is a fairly substantial learning curve. Once you get a grasp of the basic principles behind the game you really begin to enjoy yourself. Soon you will be building railroads to your hearts content, and for a good while too!

# RAILROAD TYCOON

**MICROPROSE** give you the chance to outdo BR and build your own Railroad Empire

**B**eing thrown to the mercy of British Rail every morning and evening, my train association is a pretty ghastly one; leaves on the line, points and overhead power cable failures and a myriad of glib and criminally insincere apologies. If you've had similar problems and think that you could run a railway system better, here's the chance to put your money where your mouth is and risk the wrath of a million commuters as you build your very own rail empire.

Options at the start of the game let you choose one of four scenarios, England, Europe and Eastern and Western America (the starting varying from 1828 to 1900 depending on the location), and one of four difficulty levels.

The map where the action is set is accurate, with all main towns and cities included. Only landscape features, such as mountains, lakes, farms, mines, chemical plants and steel mills are randomly generated.

The seeds of your empire are sown by building a track between two reasonably close conurbations and running a train service between them. Since this is an historically accurate program, at the start of the game train technology is poor. As the game progresses through time, new trains are "invented" and can be bought to replace your out-of-date units. But

for now you have to bite the bullet and suffer with a jalopy that does 15mph tops with two carriages.

Money is earned every time a train arrives at a station with a load. Obviously the more carried, the more revenue is generated. And with more money, you can build your track further afield, buy shares in other railroads with takeover bids in mind, or even improve your stations with hotels, restaurants, large storage areas and the like!

Any station built in an urban environment produces mail and passengers. If its catchment area includes such features as a harbour, farm or mine, goods are produced, which can be taken to other stations for even more revenue!

## THE INDUSTRIOUS INDUSTRIALIST

The key to growing your empire lies in supply and demand. At first this seems simple - take goods from one place and dump them somewhere where they can be consumed. Not so. A more intelligent railroad operator will spot areas where goods can be taken and made into other commodities to be picked up later and deposited elsewhere, such as coal to a steel mill to make steel, cotton to a textiles mill to produce textiles, hops to a brewery for beer, and steel to factories to end up with manufactured goods. This method of play produces more than double normal revenue, since manufactured goods are worth more than raw goods, and gives you a firm footing for the future.

• Julian Rignall



# THE STRATEGY GAME

# MIDWINTER

## OF THE DECADE ARRIVES

As a new Ice Age dawns in Rainbird's gigantic new classic, strategy gaming also enters a new era. For *Midwinter* is a genuinely original concept that launches revolutionary techniques onto the home computer screen.



The scenario is convincingly realistic as a new Ice Age grips the world. Together with a small group of pioneers you have colonized the Midwinter Isle, a 160,000 square mile land mass now under threat from invaders intent on seizing your sanctuary.



Compelling action and strategy take place across a spectacular 3D fractal generated landscape with its stunning geographical



accuracy. You control 32 personalities, each with different qualities, skills and complex personal relationships. Enemy movements can be tracked, and battle plans made, using the incredibly detailed on-screen map.

In your bid to defend the life-supporting heat mines, you can ski, hang-glide, travel by snow buggy or cable car, snipe and sabotage the enemy. There is no easy way to win, but the game's unique depth and absorbing complexity will keep you trying until you do.



The deep Midwinter is upon us. Be prepared for a long and exciting battle against its elements.



Running, jumping mayhem from MICROSTYLED as Rick mounts the platforms for another curtain call...

# RICK DANGEROUS II

The original *Rick Dangerous* was something of a revival for the somewhat dated platform genre, due to its devious puzzles and superb presentation. Now, some 11 months later, Rick dons leotard, cape and boots and takes to the skies in a bid to save mankind from invading alien forces lead by his arch enemy, the Fat Man.

The game begins by offering the player a choice of four of the five available levels through which you must run, crawl, jump, shoot and bomb your way.

The overall feel of *RDI*, as with *RD1*, is superb. Each level follows a very different theme



Rick meets a chilly end in Freesia.

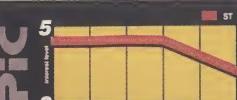
and the game boasts a wide variety of excellent graphics, all of which have been designed with tongue very firmly in cheek. The cartoon sequences preceding play are both humorous and well implemented and give the player the impression that although not breaking through any boundaries, Core have gone out of their way to produce a game with genuine style.

Obviously, no hero can be expected to do his job properly if he is unarmed. To this end, Rick is equipped with a laser gun and a number of bombs, although, as with the prequel, both are in limited supply and must be used with caution for best effect. Dotted around however, are numerous bonuses, some of which replenish your diminished stocks. In addition to these more physical defences, you are presented (in true platform style) with 6 lives with which to further your cause.

Playing the game, you will immediately realise that it is not only arcade reflexes that are required. Whilst the game is indeed fast and furious, attempting to speed through will inevitably lead you to blunder into a devious trap, of which there are many. Certain obstacles are seemingly insurmountable and require specific actions to be performed before they can be overcome.

This by no means infers, however, that *RDI* is lacking in any arcade elements. The speed at which some of the marauding nasties come at you push all hopes of a strategic withdrawal firmly to the back of your mind, at which point panic that there is has been well thought out and fits perfectly. Front-end and level-start tunes are definitely of the cartoon persuasion and round off what is, although dated in concept, a product that proves the continuing feasibility of one of the original game genres. There's just one problem: when you've cracked it (and you will – it's not that difficult) you're unlikely to want to return to it. Time then, perhaps, for *RDI*...

Graphically, *Rick Dangerous II* is superb. You cannot fail to laugh at the expressions of the characters as they maraud haphazardly into your line of fire, only to taste exactly what it is that heroes are made of! Robots, woodsmen, jujutsu



Initial interest will be held by the attractive cartoon-quality graphics and overall slick presentation. Into the game, the relative lack of polish will depend up on how much interest and the level of frustration that players will be determined to complete it. Once achieved however, incentive to return to the game will cease.

**ACE RATING**  
**870**

Well designed, coloured and implemented graphics certainly do no harm to the credibility of the ST, and prove that speed-breaking management and acute spatial awareness are still important. Some perfect complements gameplay, whilst promising nothing that it cannot deliver.

ATARI ST

#### RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST	\$24.99	TBA
AMIGA	\$24.99	TBA
IBM PC	\$24.99	TBA
CPC	\$9.995 • £14.99d	TBA
SPECTRUM	\$9.995 • £14.99d	TBA
C64/128	\$9.995 • £14.99d	TBA
No other versions planned		

• Alex Ruranski



rock men, bespectacled moles and searing lasers all display an individuality that delights the eye. This is in itself an incentive to play on into the game, just to see what Rick will die from next!

Rick himself is a typical hero - with white teeth and a gleam in his eye - and he struts about with all the confidence of someone who knows a good product when he sees it. Colour is also used to full effect and both are complemented by slick and varied animation.

As far as sound is concerned, Core have opted to go for the appropriate, rather than the technical approach. Certainly there is nothing that will have you reeling in awe at the new found sonic capabilities of the ST, but each sound that there is has been well thought out and fits perfectly.

Front-end and level-start tunes are definitely of the cartoon persuasion and round off what is, although dated in concept, a product that proves the continuing feasibility of one of the original game genres. There's just one problem: when you've cracked it (and you will – it's not that difficult) you're unlikely to want to return to it. Time then, perhaps, for *RDI*...

• Alex Ruranski

# SORCERORS GET...

Ex-Infocom personnel  
create a new LEGEND for  
Microprose

So what you like about adventure games, there are times when the industry comes up with a cracker that any gamer with half a brain ought to shell out for. *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, *Lurking Horror*, and *Wonderland*, to name but three – and two of those came from the now-defunct Infocom.

Adventure scenarios, like books, tend to draw the bulk of their inspiration from a single author, unlike other games that are usually team efforts. Lucasfilm have managed to grab Brian Moriarty, who's recently given them *Loom*, and now another Infocom genius, Steve 'Leather Goddesses' 'Planefall' Meretsky, has teamed up with some Infocompanions to form the Legend label, distributed by Microprose. *Sorcerers Get All The Girls* is his first Legendary product.

And it's excellent, no doubt about it. Although it suffers from an extremely annoying parsing defect, this is a graphic adventure par excellence. It may not have quite the technical sophistication of *Wonderland*, but it makes up for that by generating a great deal of text, some nifty pictures (with a tad of animation), and a complex story structure.

As Ernie Eaglebeak you start the game playing punchball for your wicked stepfather. You take refuge at Sorcerer University where you get stuck into student life until someone from a marauding band of phantoms clobbers you from the back of the head. When you awake, the university is deserted and you have a vague inkling

that you must locate your erstwhile Professor Tickingclock and reassemble the infamous Sorcerers Appliance using five scattered components.

**A LA CARTE**  
SGATG, like *Wonderland*, combines point-and-click menu input with traditional typing. You don't have to do any typing at all, but the menu system isn't as comprehensive as Mac Scrolls' and you may well prefer to do so. There are verb, noun, and preposition menus that enable you to construct any sentence and the parser is (with one major exception) excellent.

The display includes a compass rose that shows possible exits and some options buttons for selecting different screen configurations. The latter include a map display, showing your current location and offering a 'click on it and you'll go there' facility (which only really works for adjacent locations). You can also have a text-only display, location graphics and play around with the various report elements to create a screen layout that suits you best. When location graphics are displayed, clicking on an object describes it and double clicking does the 'obvious' thing with it (usually getting it).

All this is a vast improvement on earlier adventure titles but is still not up to the *Wonderland* standard. The effect is spoilt by one major parsing shortcoming which used to be standard but nowadays, frankly, has to be regarded as a right pain in the a\*\*e. This is the old, unintelligent 'I'll do that to do everything approach' that rears its head when you try to open a door. It goes something like this:

#### ENTER SHED

The shed door is closed

#### OPEN DOOR

The shed door is locked.

#### UNLOCK DOOR

Unlock the shed door with what?

#### UNLOCK DOOR WITH KEY

Which key? The little brown key or the big metal key?

#### UNLOCK DOOR WITH THE LITTLE BROWN KEY

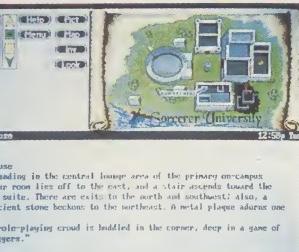
OK

#### ENTER SHED

The shed door is closed

#### OPEN DOOR

OK...



We've got rid of the menus and called up the map option, enabling us to get more narrative on screen at once and move from location to location by clicking on them...

Nowadays, if I want to enter a locked shed and I have the right key, I expect the program to do it for me without all this needless fuss and bother.

On the good side, however, SGATG is a big game with an involved and engaging story. You may not like the humour much – some of it is really dreadful – but you will like the narrative variety and the numerous little sub-scenarios you can eavesdrop on or get involved with. And of course there's also the small matter of casting spells (especially the ENLARGE BUST one, ahem...) and the girls – who actually play a rather less titillating role in the story than you might expect.

If you fancy a romp through a fictional world, castings spells, chatting up the girls, and getting into some very tight corners, this is the adventure for you. Definitely up to Infocom standards and a promising debut for Legend.

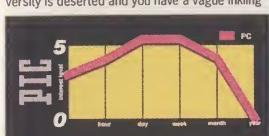
• Steve Cooke



The default screen layout gives you the option of either mouse control using the menus on the left or typing using the text window on the lower right

# GIRLS

... ALL THE



The documentation assures interest and a couple of substantial laughs but it doesn't get the adrenaline pumping out of your nostrils. Neither does the first glimpse of the game and the rather unconvincing graphics. You soon begin to appreciate the narrative detail and the numerous diversions and after a day's playing your hooked – until you crack it.



Currently on release only in the States, but Microprose UK will be making a UK distribution decision in the near future. Watch this space – but if you can't wait phone US 'Prose on 0101 301 771 6700 for mail order details.'

**PIC**

5  
0

Simulcra is an apparently complex game on first acquaintance, but after a few goes you soon change your ideas... The gameplay is both absorbing and exciting and is going to keep you hooked for some time... In the long term, however, it's not clear that the lack of hidden levels or secrets (other than the higher levels themselves) is going to limit enjoyment (but see note in version box below).

**ACE RATING**  
**936**

ATARI ST  
AMIGA

Excellent, Highly recommended to shoot-em-up fans and to ordinary gamers alike. The graphics are superb, the action is fast and varied, and the game has a great sense of atmosphere. Introducing ground-based and flight action.

RELEASE DETAILS

ATARI ST £24.99 OCT 90  
AMIGA £24.99 OCT 90  
No other versions planned



# SIMULCRA

Cyberspace rules in the far future, where even war is played out inside massive computer simulators. A particularly unpleasant virus has, however, had the effect of projecting the combat into the real world and as a result you have hordes of bloodthirsty simulcraft pilots wreaking havoc all over the place. Your objective is to enter the 'battle matrix' and destroy the other craft as well as the matrix itself.

You control a sophisticated Suface Reconnaissance Vehicle (SRV) with swing wings that give it limited flight capabilities. You drive your SRV around the matrix, encountering every so often a thin red line that denotes an energy barrier beyond which you cannot pass. You must then locate the relevant energy projector and destroy it, which will lift the barrier and allow you to proceed.

Simulcra is verging on the awesome, conjuring up immediate comparisons with the classic Virus. Your SRV rotates 360 degrees and can fly or drive. The rotation and shading are excellent and the game has a great feeling of speed. Battle is fast and furious and you can power up the SRV with loads of goodies including speed-ups, radar, fire and forget missiles, target display systems, shields, and extra lives.

The result is a fast paced 3D shoot-em-up that is slightly similar to *Resolution 101* in gameplay terms but blends in elements of *Falcon* and *Virus*.

## TECHNO PORN!

The 3D vector graphics system in *Simulcra* features solid filled 3D graphics with shadows and light intensity surfaces. The system allows solid and wireframe surfaces to be freely mixed. Stipple and transparent/semi-transparent surfaces are also employed.

The game code runs up to 252 non player objects on the map. The game cycle rate and the view cycle are independent so that game time can be kept more or less constant even if the display rate is slowed down.

Special explosion effects are achieved using a highly efficient particle controller that individually moves up to 100 particles. Definitely a game that goes with a bang!



**MICROSTYLED** hurls you into the computer war of the future and produce a red hot 3D shoot-em-up as an incentive...

as well. In addition, the grid construction introduces a maze element. Sound effects are superb and add to the sensation of speed. There's also a wonderful intro sequence.

Just what a game should be: looks good, sounds good, and plays like a dream.

• Chris Morley



# F-15 STRIKE EAGLE II

Flight sim fans know who does it best - and F15 II is our best yet!

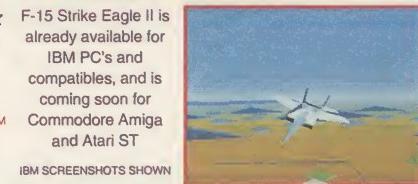
At MicroProse we're pleased that our flight simulations are acclaimed as the best technical products around. We're proud of F-19 Stealth Fighter, Gunship and Knights of the Sky, for they accurately recreate every aspect of real life piloting, from the highs to the lows.

Now we're having fun with F-15 Strike Eagle II. A fighter pilot's dream, as it is pure action all the way. Using the great 3-D graphics, real-world mapping and technical specifications of a supersonic jet, it puts the emphasis on flying and firing, dogfighting and duelling, shooting down and blowing up.

All the options you'd expect from a MicroProse flight sim are there - combining to give hundreds of different missions - but 'in-flight' you're left to concentrate on your 'stick' and your 'fire' button...and staying alive.

**MICRO PROSE**  
SIMULATION • SOFTWARE

IBM SCREENSHOTS SHOWN



The fact that there's plenty to do makes F15 II one of the most exciting simulations around...on screen presentation is brilliant...the graphics are utterly superb...it's certainly the most realistic 3D effect yet seen on a flight simulation.

C&VG 93%

# SILENT SERVICE

## MICROPROSE runs silent, deep and deadly

From its very outset, *Silent Service II* is typically Microprose: vast scenario, hugely complex gameplay and intense attention to detail. If ever there was a game that demanded significantly more than fast reflexes and a happy trigger finger, this is it.

Set against the historical backdrop of World War II, the program gives you the opportunity of recreating, in whole or in part, the career of a US submarine officer. This represents anything from thirty minutes to hundreds of hours of game time, supported by a 128 page manual, keyboard overlay with 70 commands, and dozens of mission possibilities.

Once through the obligatory security check (where you must correctly identify one of eleven Japanese warships), you are met with a massive array of options. The first of these presents you with four distinct game scenarios (see Battle Stations); others include selecting one of four difficulty levels (ranging from the complete novice, to the 'Ultimate'



**IBM PC**  
Requires VGA/MCGA, CGA and EGA graphics, whilst sound options are supported by the Ad Lib and Roland MT-32 Sound Units including digitised speech. Apart from the disk access, the game makes excellent use of the mouse and keyboard. You will not expect from the successor to what was previously the submarine game.

**RELEASE DETAILS**  
IBM PC £39.99 OUT NOW  
No other versions planned at present.

Alex Ruranski

## BATTLE STATIONS

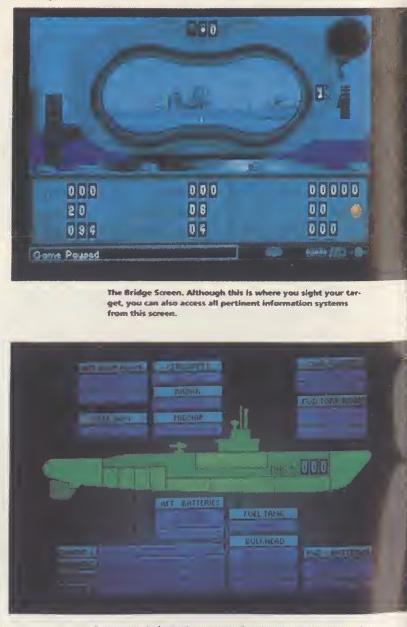
The four scenarios in *SSII* should keep even the most ardent skipper busy for months to come. First, TRAINING involves simple cruise and attack sequence in the vicinity of four unarmed freighter hulls. Its purpose is to familiarise you with the craft, the manual and the controls.

Then, there's SINGLE COMBAT, which isn't actually single at all, but drops you into one of nine engagements, eight of which are historically based. The ninth is a random encounter with a Japanese force.

SINGLE WAR PATROL propels you into the Western Pacific, hunting down the opposition, engaging them and returning to base.

CAREER: You join as a Skipper at any time during WW2, sail a series of war patrols in one or more boats, and finish up in either the grave or the victory parade. Microprose claims this final option could involve literally hundreds of hours of gameplay if you start at the beginning of the war in 1941.

All options pit you against Japan - America's mortal enemy after the raid on Pearl Harbour in 1941 until the end of the war following the atomic bombings of 1945. The struggle with Japan sprawled across the western half of the Pacific and among America's "Silent Service" heroes were men with silly names like "Mush" Morton, Dick O'Kane and Red Ramage! Now you can join them...



Powerplay 92% Generation 4 96% The One 93% T.G.M 95%

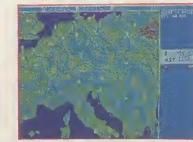
# RAILROAD TYCOON

Sid Meier's

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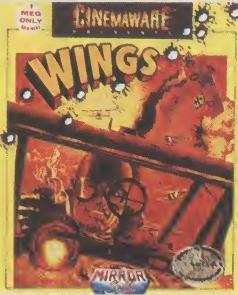


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**MICRO PROSE**  
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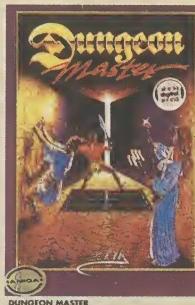
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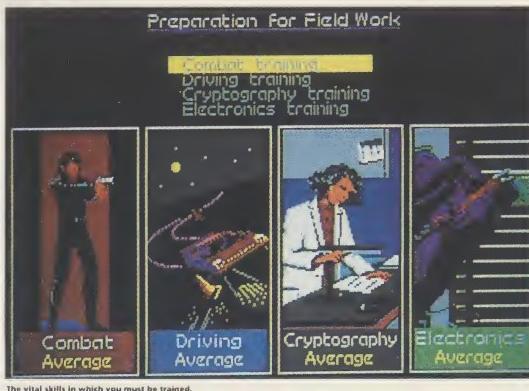
# COVERT ACTION

**Microprose involved in undercover espionage shock!**

Well known for titles of truly monolithic proportions, Microprose has come forth with another in the range of these epic games, the strategy orientated *Covert Action*, in which you play the ultimate secret agent known as Max Remington. Dissatisfied by the confines of CIA training, Remington decided to go it alone in the World of undercover investigation - at which he excelled. Now, having worked for nearly every western Government, Remington is rumoured to take on only those cases he finds personally intriguing - the one exception to which is said to be those asked of him personally by the U.S. President.

Upon loading, the game runs through a short intro sequence after which you are presented with three options enabling you to either create or load a new or saved character, or to practice a skill. It's vital to familiarise yourself with the important areas of gameplay. These areas concern combat, driving, cryptography and electronics.

Combat is generally coupled with break-ins, whereby you must first select a point of entry. It relies initially on arming yourself adequately, depending upon the tension of the situation you are entering. Equipment includes a hand/machine gun, body armour, grenades, a

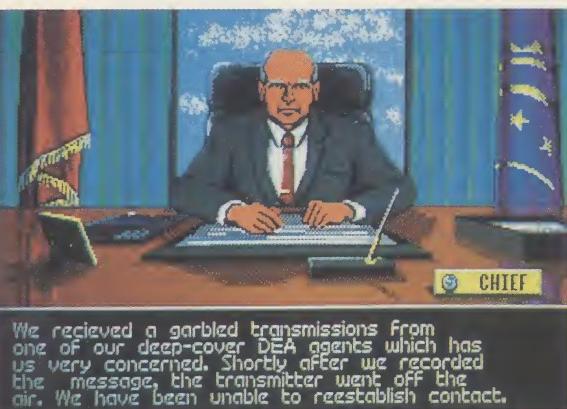


motion detector and camera. Once inside the building, you will be shown a large plan display of the room and its contents through which you are free to rummage. It is advisable that the camera is taken, in addition to available bugging devices, should the room prove fruitful. A smaller display to the right includes the area immediately outside where any additional activity (like approaching guards) is shown, and a figure showing depicting resources. Combat itself is only engaged if your unscrupulous activities are discovered by others - whereupon a swift hail of bullets drops them like flies. In addition to physical combat, Remington may set booby-traps, achieved by placing a grenade in a strategic position whereby enemy movement will detonate it.

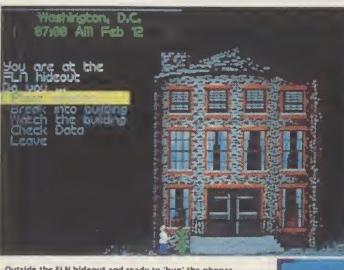
The second of the major skills, (driving) involves pursuit of a suspect through the city streets - having first chosen from four possible

#### FROM MICHIGAN TO MICROPROSE

Sid Meier, mainman behind *Covert Action* is rather more than 'just' a programmer. ACE now presents a compact biography on the man... As a child, Sid held a fascination with history, science and game design. In 1976 he graduated from the University of Michigan with a degree in computer science. Following his graduation, Meier began working for the company General Instruments Corporation Business Systems Division. In 1980, Meier purchased an Atari 800 as he felt its graphic capabilities were well-suited to the games he so enjoyed. Later that year, he set up an Atari user group. Having played an aerial combat game in an arcade, Sid felt he could add more realism with software specifically designed for home computers. Sid entitled his creation *HELLCAT ACE* and from this, Microprose Software emerged. Sid's ideas that software should cater to challenging situations, whether beginner or expert, were at the forefront then as they are now, acknowledged by such Microprose releases as *F-19 Stealth Fighter*, *Railroad Tycoon*, *Silent Service* (I and II) and *M1 Tank Platoon*. Keep it up Sid...



Hall to the chief - the Pres briefs our agent.



Outside the FLN hideout and ready to 'bug' the phones.



pursuit cars with varying speeds, handling and levels of conspicuously. Pursuit is depicted via large map to the left, displaying all the locations you've visited. To the right are two smaller, scrolling windows, the lower showing a more detailed map and the upper, a 3-D representation of the cars. Having reached your destination a menu of options is displayed, (depending on your state of play - practise or otherwise).

During this section you also have the ability to arrest subjects, but be wary that they don't become too aware of your presence beforehand - or you may become the hunted.

Cryptography involves simply deciphering a message sent by an opposing organisation. This is achieved by entering the letter you wish to decipher, followed by your chosen alternative. Once completed, the translated message will invariably reveal clues necessary to the completion of your mission.

Finally, the electronics section involves studying a partially connected circuit linked to either a wiretap or a car tracer and several alarms. The objective is obvious - connect the active current to either a tap or a tracer without setting off an alarm. A time limit is imposed, after which an approaching guard will deter your attempts.

Tapping phones is a necessity as regards gathering

information, whereas car tracing proves useful when following a suspect.

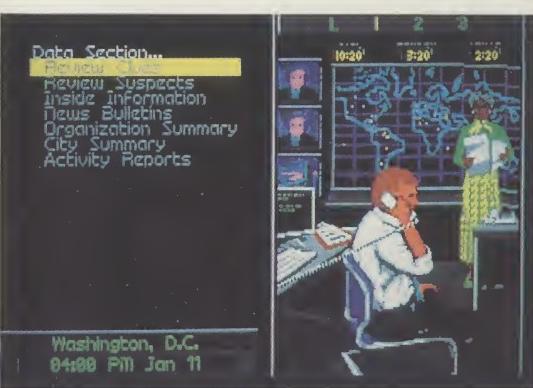
Besides each of the four major sections, *Covert Action* includes dozens of additional scenes, locations, possible actions and inter-linking requirements, giving the player enormous tactical scope. These include observation, (a menu from which any of the major skills may be reached) where you may watch a suspected building or suspect, and intelligence, giving you the ability to scan local and international reports, access double agents or access a crime chronology making collating evidence easy, as it is all stored by your assistant with whom you may liaise.

Each of the organisations encountered will have agents and branches throughout the World

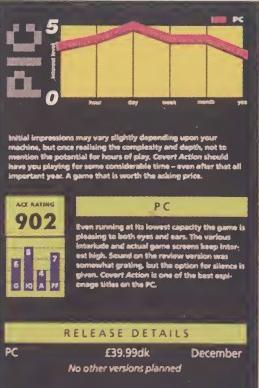
making travel vital, whether inter-state or inter-continental. Once having reached a destination, play continues as normal.

Complexity of gameplay has become synonymous with the Microprose name, that *Covert Action* has bountiful supplies of. The choice of options provide a depth of play rarely seen. A choice of four skill levels, three mission areas (Middle East, Europe or the Americas), three basic crime-orientations (espionage, internal crime or terrorism) and over a dozen of enemy operatives (at least half a dozen of which will be involved with each crime). *Covert Action* is a game that will take many hours of play to successfully complete.

• Alex Ruranski



I wonder if he's calling the ACE interactive newsline on 0898 555562!



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Four grades of opponent.

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Graphical detail and depth of gameplay are claims made by others - here they are reality.



FLY F19 SOON ON  
YOUR ATARI ST AND  
COMMODORE  
AMIGA.

MICRO PROSE

IBM Screen shot shown. Actual screens may vary.

# STRIKE EAGLE II

MICROPOSE spend a night at Sierra Hotel

**POSSIBLY** one of the most popular "adult" computer pastimes, computer generated flight simulations have come a long way from the early PISON Flight Simulator days, where you could get suitably enthralled by a row of dots in the shape of runway landing lights. In these enlightened days, when computer flight simulations are so advanced the USAF are using them to train pilots, you'd have to be clinically insane to want to release another title into a field with such abnormally high standards. Once again Micropose have managed not only to beat their previous best title, in this case F-19 Stealth Bomber, but have also come up with a worthy contender to Microsoft's Falcon.

To clear up any confusion, *Strike Eagle II* is a flight/combat simulator that offers you the chance to fly simulated strike missions through a choice of war zones, ranging from Libya (an easy ride due to their outdated equipment) through the Persian Gulf and Vietnam to Europe (where you can quite easily become a sitting

duck to the most effective defensive equipment there is).

In effect, *SE II* is an updated version of *F-19*. Indeed, the areas you fly over are identical to the aforementioned *F-19*, as are the enemy. The first real difference is that the plane is a lot more fun to fly. First off, you've got a lot more speed to play with, with the added fun of afterburners on board. Also due to its sleeker design, the *F-15* is a lot more manoeuvrable than the cumbersome Stealth Bomber, which adds up to much more enjoyable combat. None of this nancy radar evasion for me.

Another thing that has been simplified is the weapons system. Unlike Stealth Bomber, you always carry the same payload of three types of weapon. AIM-120A AMRAAM medium range air-to-air guided missiles, AIM-9M Sidewinder short range air-to-air infra red homing missiles and AGM-65D Maverick air-to-ground attack missiles. Each can be readied for fire at the touch of a button, and selecting a weapon automatically selects the correct radar

setting and enemy tracking mode. All three missiles are 'fire and forget', meaning all you have to do is 'lock on' the missile to a certain enemy (keep tracking the enemy until it comes into range of the currently selected missile, at which point you told a missile 'lock' is now effective) and press fire to launch the missile.

In CGA, EGA or Hercules, the game looks the same as *F-19*, which is no bad thing. Lots of multi-faceted filled vectors and the like, but in VGA or MCGA, this has to be the best looking flight simulator yet. Just the sheer variety of views alone are enough to warrant a high mark, with missile view, three sorts of external view, and the option to see yourself from your enemy's point of view. The best thing about it, however, is the incredible use of colour. If you remember *Archipelagos* on the Amiga, you'll recall the very clever misting effect on the horizon. *SE II* has that very same effect, and it is extremely effective. The feeling of depth is incredible. Add to that the brilliant sensation of speed and you've really got something.

Though maybe not as smooth as Velocity's *Jetfighter*, *F-15* is every bit as fast, and you really notice it on low-level flight. Easily the breathtaking effect is the missile view when you've launched something at the ground. The missiles fly much faster than your plane, so the speed in itself is exhilarating, but it's when the missile picks up speed and starts plummeting toward its target...oh for a hydraulic chair!

So why pick this over *Falcon*? In terms of being a flight simulator, *Falcon* has the edge, but even so, this is ideal for a beginner, as it's very easy to fly and it's a lot of fun. Also, experienced buffs are going to get a lot of fun out of this simply for the large number of missions involved and the variety of sceneries. In terms of accuracy, it may never match up to the might *Falcon*, but I can still see myself putting in more than a few hours on this one yet.

• Tony Dillon

## PC VERSION

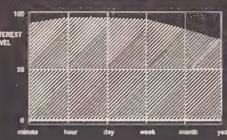
Incredible. The graphics are amazingly fast and the feeling of distance is enough to scare even the least agoraphobic amongst us. Add to that variety of gameplay and enough challenge to keep you coming back and you've got yourself a regular addition to the pink pages.

**GRAPHICS 9   IQ FACTOR 8  
AUDIO 7   FUN FACTOR 9  
ACE RATING 912**

## RELEASE BOX

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## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE



Takes almost no time at all to get wrapped up in this synthetically created universe, but once you're in, you've just got to keep fighting.

## ACTION SEQUENCE



You've spotted the enemy! Home in on him!



That's it, you've got a lock!

## TECHNO PORN!

OK, so just how fast is this beast? Well, you can check the frame rate for whatever machine you are running on as follows. Hit the ALT and F keys, which will print the number of Jiffies per 4 frames on the HUD. Take this number and divide it by the Hz rate of your graphics card: 60 Hz for EGA and CGA, 50 Hz for Hercules Mono, and 70 Hz for MCGA. This gives you seconds per frame. Invert it and you will get frames per second for your machine configuration. Nifty, eh?

The memory taken varies from machine to machine. On a Tandy it takes 384K of memory while on an MCGA machine it takes 512K.

The program took approximately 1.5 man years to develop with many people working on it. Andy Hollis was the main programmer with Sid Meier, Bruce Shelley with Max Remington designed the 3d objects while Bruce alone designed the worlds. Mike Haire did most of the normal art with Murray Taylor assisting. Alan Roreau along with Chris Taormino and Russ Cooney helped develop game play and of course did the normal testing. Jeff Briggs wrote the manual.

The MCGA/VGA graduated horizon by distance was designed and implemented by Andy Hollis and the Director mode was designed and implemented by Sid Meier.



As Wild Bill Stealey himself would put it, missiles away!

**Fighter Pilot - Spectrum**  
One of the many Spectrum flight simulators around at that time, the only difference being that this one actually gave you decent combat. The scenery was simple: a few dots, yellow ground, blue sky and the enemy planes were merely triangles, but there was something really involving about that little D.I. battlefield.

**Gunship - C64**  
Exciting helicopter combat action with amazingly fast filled vectors, especially for a C64. Micropose managed to fit in a heck of a lot onto one little 5 1/4" disk - five areas to fly through, an infinite amount of randomly generated missions, three different skill levels, dozens of different enemies, and the ability to build a character, complete with medals and promotions, all awarded with a suitable full colour still picture. Still one of the best.

**Falcon Mission Disk - ST/Amiga**  
The cream of the crop so far. After building the seemingly ultimate flight simulator, Mirrorsoft came up with not only a new battle field for you to fly over, but a whole war to fight single handedly protecting no less than three lines of defence while thwarting the oncoming invasion. Pretty heavy stuff, and all played out with some of the fastest filled vectors yet.



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Although we've tried to give a reasonable impression of a typical issue of ACE, why not take a look at the real thing. There's a copy on the newstands now, and a subscription offer on page 16.

**Ace magazine is published on the 8th of every month by Emap Images.**



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If the might of the Saharan Empire is proving too much, our exclusive ACE Flames of Freedom Hotline is for you!

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*Good, Great, Best,  
Better*

**élite**, n. *The choice part, the best, (of). [F.= choice]*

**plus**, adj. *Additional, extra; positive. [L.= more]*



*Plus*



Good games come and go, and great ones last much longer. The best can win awards, but only one can claim to be Elite.

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The original versions of Elite are available for Atari ST and Commodore Amiga, at £24.99.

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# TANK BUSTING!

**Everyone's been so obsessed with the latest state-of-the-art flight simulations recently that the more down-to-earth armoured divisions of computer entertainment seem to have been forgotten. After you've flicked on the afterburners and dived in out of the sun, surely rumbling around on the ground taking pot-shots at other metal mickies must be a bit, well, just a teensy bit dull?**

**Oh boy, do we have news for you...!**

Advanced tank design, as on this recent example, is particularly suited to modern 3D displays. The angular shielding, designed to deflect as well as resist bombardment, has a nice filled vector look even in real life! M1TP offers a high degree of detail in the display, but you can toggle the level of detail to suit different machines. The more detail, the more processing power you need...

**A**nyone who remembers the shock of seeing their windscreen shatter after receiving a shell up the rear in Battlezone will know that tank busting can result in almost terminal adrenal doses - and the good news is that the software boys are about to ram this lesson home with several promised heavy-duty tank simulations. Microprose's is the first to appear, Realtime's Tank Command is poised for release, and there are others rumbling along the track. What's all the fuss about?

ACE first got its hands on a copy of Microprose's M1 Tank Platoon during a visit to the Bovington Tank Museum in the company of 'Prose's Major 'Wild Bill' Stealey. We were pretty impressed by the speed of the game, the detailed 3D VGA display, the choice of heavyweight armour you could fling about, and the even heavier weight 206pp manual which must be getting on for an industry record.

In fact the manual just about sums up the new era of tank sims. Things may be slower on the ground, but that simply means more opportunity for strategy and game detail. None of those 206 pages are wasted, and every one tells you something useful about the game - yet it's a tribute to the program design in M1 Tank Platoon that you can get down to playing immediately. What's more, the detail in the game, which ranges from the explanation of and opportunity to indulge in conventional tank tactics to the muzzle velocity of the 7.62mm PKT Medium Machine Gun, isn't fiction - Microprose had to invoke the Freedom Of Information Act in the States to get the necessary documentation released, and they've made excellent use of it.

Our only niggle here was the quality of the manual binding, which appeared to shed pages at an alarming rate. The manual's pretty essential, however, so we ended up hole-punching all the pages and popping them in a ring binder.

#### THE GAME

M1TP revolves around your choice of platoon, your choice of men, and your choice of conflict scenario. Stored on disk (and updated every time you play) is a roster of platoons, each one



This is where the gunner would be sitting in real life. It's rather less comfortable than your armchair...

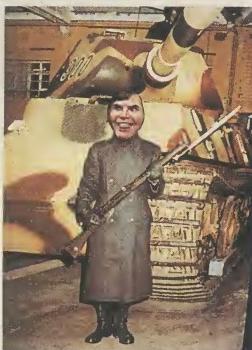


featuring different names and associated skill ratings. Your average tank comes equipped with a tank commander sticking his head out of the hatch, a gunner who guns, a loader who loads, and a driver who keeps the 57 tonnes of heavy metal thundering across the 3D terrain at speeds of up to 67kph - an unnerving experience for the uninitiated who thought that tanks, well, sort of trundled along.

The skills of your crew are of paramount importance and your long-term objective is to develop their skills in action, winning the medals and improving their performance. Your ultimate goal is, naturally, to become embroiled in a full-scale war against the Soviets and send their T80m84's and other metal monsters to the scrapheap. Microprose obviously aren't in a hurry to declare an end to East-West conflict, which seems a pity until you realise that if the game is to be realistic it has to reflect the fact that the Soviets are currently the only people with some hardware to challenge you with.

Winning the war, however, is quite impossible unless your crews are up to scratch. That's because M1TP is a clever blend of player intervention and computer control. Battles are fought over a 3D map with hills, valleys, rivers, and many other topographical features. At any time during battle you can select any one of your vehicles, wherever and whatever it may be, from a scout helicopter (yes, even total flight freaks get their fix here) checking out the opposition to an M1 Abrahams sneaking up the river, and get the relevant 3D view up on your screen.

With tanks, this selection gives you complete control over that vehicle and all the crew members. The good news, however, is that this complete control is supplemented by the computer so that you can, for example, take the commander's position, sticking your head out of the hatch and peering around with your binoculars, while at the same time telling your driver to go full speed ahead, your gunner to fire at will, and the other vehicles in your formation to take up Echelon left formation (ranged behind you, guns at 45 degrees). Suddenly, there you are careering across the landscape, guns all blazing together, smashing your way through the opposition...flight sim freaks can eat hot lead for all I care, this beats single-handed aerial combat any day.



OK, so Wild Bill Stealey looks as if he's finally flipped his lid. However, he did have the good sense to use the Freedom of Information Act to get the data he needed for the game.



Major Wild Bill takes a real tankbuster through the game.

# ATTACK!

How does it feel to roar into battle at the head of your armoured platoon? Here's a quick engagement with the Soviets to whet your appetite...



On the map display, here at full zoom, we see our four tanks ready for action. It all looks green because they're on a hill...Some of the crews are over the hill, but that's another matter...



Zoom out to see the entire map. The panel on the right shows the current vehicle's statistics. Note that the commander is, er, 'inept'. The red spots are hostile vehicles. Let's go get 'em!

The map screen is where you do your thinking, and where you find out what's going on across the entire battle arena. Your units and the enemy's are all clearly marked and you can select any unit (hostile or friendly) by pinpointing it with the crosshairs and pressing RETURN. This not only gives you control over it, but also all pertinent information in a window to the right.

INFO	
120mm GUN	LASER SIGHT
NO MISSLES	CHEM ARMO
MACHINEGUNS	GREAT MB
Tank Co: 2LT Kusin	IN
Gunner: SGT Elias	POOR
Loader: CPL Wasser	FAR
Driver: SGT Coyle	POOR
DAMAGE	
AMMUNITION	
HEAT=20 AP=20 HEF=0 WFS	
LAST PLATOON ORDERS	
HALT	
CEASE FIRE	
A ADV FAST	F FIRE AT WIL
S ADV SLOW	C CEASE FIRE
H HALT	E ENG FRONT
B BACKUP	D ENG REAR
L LEFT TURN	< ENG LEFT
R RIGHT TURN	> ENG RIGHT
M MOVE TO	+ SMOKE ON
T TURN TO	- SMOKE OFF
EN-NEXT VEHICLE	
FR-NEXT VEHICLE	

A quick eyeball out of the hatch catches one of our other platoon members on the left. We're going to follow the stream to the west and then cut off north to engage the enemy (check the map).



As we approach, the gunner gets jumpy. Headie indicator at bottom centre selects appropriate ammo we're commanding using sabot armour piercing (range around 1500 metres). The target's visible dead ahead just above the sights - all we've got to do now is close in and let rip!

## THE ACE VERDICT

We rate M1TP at 926. That ought to speak for itself. It's a welcome break from flight sims that boasts enough detail to keep even the most compulsive tipper happy, and at the same time has a breadth of challenge and combat scenarios that should satisfy the most ardent gamester. A winner.

# MIDWINTER

At last we've got our hands on a full production copy of *Midwinter* (extensively previewed in earlier issues of ACE). You may have read reviews of it elsewhere in recent months, but these were taken from a pre-production version that was demonstrated to magazines. This is the first gameplay review you're likely to see... much more important, in our view.

The game comes with bags of support material: a very lengthy manual (with a few misprints), a short 'quickstart' instruction sheet, a map, and a pad of mini-maps that you can use for planning campaigns. Much as I like quick start instructions, this is definitely one game you cannot play effectively without reading at least half the manual.

What's good about it, however, is that you can start playing straightaway. Your objective is prevent Masters' invasion force overrunning the Midwinter island by recruiting Peace Force members and combining occasional direct attack (using rifles, missiles, grenades etc) with strategic management of people and resources.

The first thing to do is check the map (you start in a different position each game, but other features and people remain in the same location). Where is the nearest garage to get a snow buggy (quicker than skiing)? Where is the nearest potential recruit? And where is Kristiansen (who can recruit four other people

**MICROPROSE'S**  
Mike Singleton  
megagame hits the

streets at last...

that captured characters can easily be freed (by blowing up their prison) and injured ones are automatically 'rescued' and dumped in the nearest village. Combine these advantages with the fact that, when you start, the enemy has already overrun much of the South-East, and you have a situation that forces you to act with all possible speed. Unlike some complex games, this made easier by the fact that although you need a lot of background info from the manual to play effectively, the actual



Skiing is deceptively easy at the beginning because Stark is very good at it. Other characters are more likely to take a tumble, wasting valuable time in the process.

commands are very simple to learn. You can use mouse, joystick, or keyboard – the manual recommends a mouse but I found the joystick easier for skiing and boggling.

Mike Singleton's previous mega-hit, *Lords of Midnight*, succeeded because of its playability – none of the other *Midnight* games came anywhere close. It's a great relief to report that *Midwinter* is undoubtedly as playable as LOM and a good deal more challenging. The only drawback is that the landscape isn't quite detailed enough (OK, it's all covered in snow) but you spend much more time thinking and planning

RELEASE BOX		
ATARI ST	£29.99k	OUT NOW
AMIGA	TBA	TBA
PC	TBA	TBA
No other versions planned.		



The initial feel of the game is very favourable – well packaged, and interesting documentation.

There's a long learning curve – at least a day for the committed player – but the joy of *Midwinter* is that you can get started straightforwardly and make meaningful progress immediately. Unlike some computer games, there's no point in getting discouraged because the learning curve is just too difficult.

There are three ways of playing (that determine how the enemy attacks you). If at all which effectively provide various levels of difficulty. The only trouble here is that if you win on the easiest level you are not so likely to want to win again on a higher level since the actual strategic process remains the same (it's simply more difficult to achieve). However this does extend the long-term interest slightly, but then perhaps this is academic; you're certainly not going to finish this one in a hurry, and you WILL want to finish it – you can be sure of that!

Two disks, but almost no disk swapping at all. The graphics are excellent, with a variety of textures and effects making the game look very attractive. It's a bit of a show-off though. This is one game that would have been lost from some moody reviewer. The graphics are probably familiar by now from numerous sources – attractive and functional but not immediately groundbreaking.

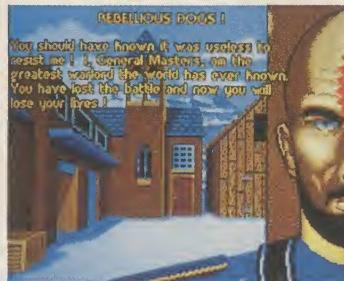
**ATARI ST**  
GRAPHICS 8 IQ FACTOR 9 ACE RATING 948  
AUDIO 4 FUN FACTOR 7

than you did in the previous game. It's also a pity since you need it frequently. These niggles apart, this is a sure-fire success. Stand by for a full player's guide in next month's ACE.

Steve Cooke



Using the map is a frequent necessity while planning your campaign. Moving your arrow over a feature brings up information in the panel in the right. We've just started and have located our first potential recruit.



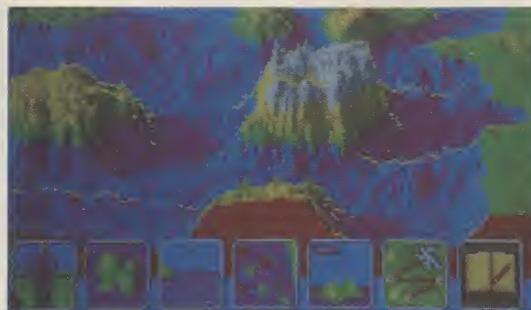
immediately by radio, if he can find one! Lazy players will quit and restart until they find themselves in an initial location either right by a garage or close to one, preferably centrally located.

From then on, it's a matter of moving your characters around as efficiently as possible (they get tired and injured very easily), balancing the need to destroy resources (denying them to the enemy) with your own need to use them. Gameplay is made much easier through the fact

**ACE RATED**  
**948**

The only way to start again is to restart the game. Your reward: this screen, and the sound effects of a firing squad in the distance.

screentest computer



ACE PREPLAY	
	Easier to control than Midwinter
	Character control
	Interaction
	Lots of depth
It remains to be seen just how intelligent the computerised characters will be	
<b>Release Details</b>	
AMIGA	£24.99
ST	£24.99
	Feb

## FLAMES of FREEDOM

Microprose prepare to launch their assault on the New Year market with one of the biggest sequels around...

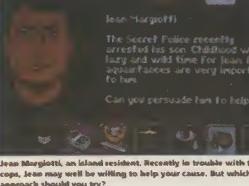


Driving over the sandy dunes in your jeep. The status area at the top of the screen shows direction and state of affairs.

Maelstrom Games has been working on *Flames of Freedom* ever since the completion of *Midwinter*, and it has now reached the final straight in the development race.

Rather than simply producing a different scenario based on the *Midwinter* game mechanics, the whole game shell has been re-created to make *Flames of Freedom* a truly massive and original game. Maelstrom paid close attention to criticisms of the original game, in order to align the game with everyone's tastes.

The most universally criticised element was that the number of characters which had to be controlled was simply too large. It wasn't possible to keep tabs on all the characters at once, and the game tended to be a massive juggling act rather than a linear path to a successful conclusion.



Jean Maroplanti, an island resident. Recently in trouble with the cops, Jean may well be willing to help your cause. But which approach should you try?



Making faces. From a wide selection of fleshly items, you can construct your very own special agent.

Since you are essentially alone in your mission, it's vital to control the indigenous personnel from each island in an effective manner. When you bump into one of these people, you can opt to use your Charm, sex appeal, authority, reasoning or deception to influence them. If you beg too much, however, you won't have much authority. If you rush around threatening everyone, no-one will listen to your reasoning.

Along with the niceties of interaction, there's the more physical side of the game, rushing around from island to island, blowing up enemy installations and claiming each atoll for the Free World. Since the game offers an enormous play area, it isn't desirable to have to watch all of the driving. Instead, an autopilot option allows you to plot your destination, and let the computer get on with getting you there. You will only be alerted or disturbed if there's some fighting to be done.



Driving over the sandy dunes in your jeep. The status area at the top of the screen shows direction and state of affairs.